

Pronouns

The purpose of a pronoun is to replace a noun. Pronouns can be broken into five classes: **personal, interrogative, demonstrative, indefinite, and relative.**

In order for a sentence to work, the pronoun must clearly refer to the antecedent - the noun that it replaces. The pronoun and antecedent must agree in number with the noun or phrase it references. Therefore, if a noun or pronoun is singular or plural, then the antecedent must match. It is best to place the pronoun as close to its antecedent as the sentence allows.

- ♦ **Tim** lent **his** car to Eric. (The car belongs to the antecedent Tim, so the possessive pronoun “his” is used)

Out of the five classes, **personal pronouns** are used most often: **I, you, he, she, it, we, and they.** With the exception of **it**, the personal pronouns refer to people. Each form of personal pronoun lets the reader know who is speaking, who is being spoken about, or who is spoken to within the sentence. With that in mind, personal pronouns can be divided into three cases: the subjective case, the objective case, and the possessive case.

Personal Pronouns				
Point of View and Number		Subjective	Objective	Possessive
First Person	Singular	I	Me	My, Mine
Second Person	Singular	You	You	Your, Yours
Third Person	Singular	He	Him	His
Third Person	Singular	She	Her	Her, Hers
Third Person	Singular	It	It	Its
		*They/Ze		
First Person	Plural	We	Us	Our, Ours
Second Person	Plural	You	You	Your, Yours
Third Person	Plural	They	Them	Their, Theirs

*For gender neutrality or gender nonconforming persons/contexts, they (sing.) or alternative pronouns may be utilized. When using pronouns in conversation or writing, always ask if you are not sure which are appropriately preferred.

In the **subjective case**, the pronoun is acting as the **subject**.

- ♦ **I** decided to buy a new car.
- ♦ **You** can take a ride.
- ♦ Eric never drives without putting on **his** seatbelt.

In the **objective case**, the pronoun is receiving the action of a verb, compound verb, preposition, or phrase.

- ♦ Eric gave **me** a ride.
- ♦ Tim gave the car keys to **you**.
- ♦ Tim took **them** for a ride.

In the **possessive case**, the pronoun is defining the ownership of a particular object or person.

- ♦ The polka-dotted umbrella is **mine**.
- ♦ Is this red umbrella **yours**?

- ♦ The striped umbrella is hers.

Interrogative Pronouns are used to **ask questions**. The answer to the question usually determines the antecedent. Until then, the antecedent is unknown to the reader.

- ♦ Who is at the door?
- ♦ To whom did you give the book?
- ♦ What topic was taught today?

Interrogative Pronouns				
Who	Whom	Whose	What	Which

Demonstrative Pronouns point out specific persons, places, or things. They may function as nouns or adjectives.

- ♦ This (cookie) has the most calories.
- ♦ Those cookies are fattening.

Demonstrative Pronouns		
Pronoun	Number	Reference
This	Singular	near
That	Singular	far
These	Plural	near
Those	Plural	far

Indefinite Pronouns do not refer to one particular person or thing. Most take singular verbs.

- ♦ Something fell off the shelf.
- ♦ Both can be found in the library.

Common Indefinite Pronouns	
Singular	Another, anybody, anyone, anything, each, either, everybody, everyone, everything, neither, nobody, none, no one, nothing, one, other, somebody, someone, something
Singular or Plural	All, any, none, some
Plural	Both, few, many, others, several

Relative Pronouns link the clause which they introduce to their antecedent.

- ♦ The boy who lost his bike walked home from school.
- ♦ Mary noticed that Bob had lost weight.

Relative Pronouns		
Who	Which	That
Use "who" to refer to the antecedent when it is a person	Use "which" or "that" to refer to animals and things	

